National Highway Development Project comprises of improvement of highways connecting 4 mctropoUtan cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Calcutta and East-West corridor from Silcher to Porbandar and North-South corridor from Kanyakumari to Srinagar to 4/6 lane facility and Salem-Cochin section of NH-47. The Plan will be completed in next 10 years by National Highways Authority of India at an estimated cost of Rs. 54,000 crores (at current prices).

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The proposals for infrastructure development of Inland Water Transport and Strategy for its development are under consideration.

Modernisation of Ports

1352. DR. Y. LAKSHMl PRASAD: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state the perspective planning made to handle the traffic volume in sea with likely traffic growth for another decade by modernising major ports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR, DEBENDRA PRADHAN): A study has been commissioned through M/s Rail India Technical & Economic Services Ltd. (RITES) for preparation of a perspective plan for the Port sector covering period up to year 2020.

The working group for 9th plan had estimated a port traffic volume of 424 million tonnes by the end of 9th plan period i.e., 2001-2002. Keeping in view the growth of traffic, steps have been taken to create additional capacity in existing major ports under various plan schemes as well as through private sector investment. A new major port at Ennore, 25 Km north of Chennai is under construction with a capacity to handle 16 million tonnes of coal per annum. A programme for modernisation of port equipment/floatilla has also been taken up.